

**SUMMARY OF THE
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 1, 2000**

The Proficiency Testing (PT) Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference at 1 p.m Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on Tuesday, August 1, 2000. The meeting was led by its chair, Ms. Barbara Burmeister of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. *The main purpose of this meeting was to discuss potential nominees for the open committee position, the status and next steps of the new PT subcommittee, and the schedule of the upcoming face-to-face meeting.*

INTRODUCTION

Ms. Burmeister reviewed the minutes from the teleconference on June 20, 2000 and the PT Committee meeting at NELAC VI on June 26, 2000. The committee agreed that the minutes are final. The status of the Action Items is as follows:

- C The errata sheet will be submitted for posting on the NELAC website after confirmation is received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - National Exposure Research Laboratory (NERL) in Cincinnati, OH.
- C Ms. Burmeister has completed responses to comments received to date.
- C Ms. Burmeister has completed the summary of final changes to Chapter 2 of the NELAC Standards (dated 6/29/00).
- C Ms. Burmeister has sent a letter to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)/National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) that addresses the PT Committee's concerns about performance as a Proficiency Testing Oversight Body/Proficiency Test Provider Accreditor (PTOB/PTPA).
- C Mr. Larry Jackson has begun forming a workgroup for standardization issues.

Ms. Burmeister said that the committee should be caught up on all action items from previous meetings.

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ms. Burmeister welcomed two new committee members, Mr. Anand Mudambi, from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Mr. Ralph Obenauf, from SPEX CertiPrep, Inc.

The committee discussed potential committee members to fill the open voting position. Although the qualifications for one of the nominees is acceptable, there may be a conflict of interest because a current committee member is a contractor to the nominee's organization. Ms. Burmeister said that she emailed both Ms. Jeanne Hankins, NELAC Director, and Dr. Chuck Brokopp, NELAC Chair, to see whether the committee can pursue this nominee.

FINAL CHANGES TO CHAPTER 2 AND APPENDICES

Sections 2.2.2 and D.0

Ms. Burmeister said that during a breakfast meeting at NELAC VI, with Ms. Hankins and Dr. Ken Jackson of the NELAC Board of Directors, it was decided that the NELAC BoD cannot approve a PTOB/PTPA. The only viable option at this time is for a PTOB/PTPA to be selected by the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) Accrediting Authorities (AAs). Some AAs have the ability in their state code to designate/approve a PTOB/PTPA. Dr. Jackson had said that the State of New York can perform this task if needed. He agreed to work with the PT Committee in doing so. Sections 2.2.2 and D.0 were modified to enable this to happen.

Section 2.1.3

The proposed addition of “method” to “program/matrix/analyte” was not approved during the voting session. Section 2.1.3 was taken out as a separate vote, and failed by majority.

PT FIELDS OF TESTING (FOT) ERRATA SHEET

The PT FOT Errata Sheet that now includes analyte numbers will be sent to Ms. Hankins for posting on the NELAC Website after confirmation of the new analyte numbers is received from EPA - NERL in Cincinnati. Ms. Burmeister said that she will also ask that the errata sheet be personally sent to each of the NELAP AAs and PT providers.

PT SUBCOMMITTEE FOR IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

A new subcommittee is being formed by the PT Committee to discuss standardization issues related to implementation of the NELAC PT Program and provide recommendations to the standing committee. The new subcommittee will be made up of representatives of environmental analytical laboratories, PT providers, and Accrediting Authorities. Mr. Jackson sent out an announcement on July 30, 2000 to a list of representatives from AAs provided by Ms. Hankins. He will review the list of registrants from NELAC VI to identify other contributors to contact. In addition, Mr. Jackson said that Mr. Jerry Parr offered to put the announcement in the Catalyst publication, *Calibrate*. Mr. Jackson will contact respondents during the week of August 21, 2000 to set up a meeting date (probably mid to late September). He will also send an update of subcommittee membership to Ms. Burmeister.

SCHEDULE OF FACE-TO-FACE MEETING

The committee is considering scheduling the face-to-face meeting to coincide with the subcommittee meeting so committee members can attend. Possible meeting locations are Ft. Meade in Baltimore, MD or the EPA facility in Research Triangle Park, NC.

SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION/PT FIELDS OF TESTING UPDATE

Ms. Burmeister received an email from Dr. Ken Jackson regarding restructuring the Scope of Accreditation. The Program Policy and Structure Committee is currently discussing what constitutes an “analyte group” and how to accredit by analyte group. The PT Committee needs to consider what PT requirements are needed for an analyte group. Ms. Burmeister asked the committee to think about this issue for discussion at a future teleconference.. She will keep the committee posted with new developments from the Program Policy and Structure Committee.

COMMENTS

Ms. Burmeister asked committee members for help with a question from Dr. Steve Arms of the Florida Department of Health (DOH). He has a laboratory that does not routinely run low level soil analyses (8260 analytes). They use methanol extraction for medium level soils (method 624). PT samples that are currently available are not in the medium level concentration range. Dr. Arms asked whether this laboratory must analyze a PT sample regardless of level or, as in this case, there is not a PT sample available.

One committee member responded that a PT provider will never be able to match exactly every combination of analytes and concentration ranges for which a laboratory seeks accreditation. PT samples are designed to challenge a laboratory’s ability to perform all aspects of a method regardless of concentration range. Also, accreditation is not by extraction/preparation method. Therefore, it is the committee’s intention that PT samples are available and must be analyzed regardless of concentration range. All members agreed and Ms. Burmeister said that she will respond to Dr. Arms.

MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE UPDATE

Ms. Cindy Nettrour said that there is no update from the Membership and Outreach Committee. At this time, they are waiting on the list of new committee chairs.

EQUIVALENCY CRITERIA FOR PT SAMPLES

Ms. Burmeister asked the committee to come up with suggestions for NIST to measure equivalency between PT providers. They will be discussed during a future teleconference.

MISCELLANEOUS

Teleconferences scheduled for August through October, 2000 will be only one and a half hours long. The next call is on August 15, 2000.

ACTION ITEMS
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 1, 2000

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Ms. Barbara Burmeister will pursue the open committee position and the potential conflict of interest.	ASAP
2.	Ms. Burmeister will send the PT FOT Errata Sheet to Ms. Jeanne Hankins for posting on the website and will request that it be sent personally to each of the NELAP AAs and PT providers.	
3.	Mr. Larry Jackson will try to identify additional contributors for the PT subcommittee for implementation issues.	
4.	Mr. Jackson will contact respondents for the subcommittee to set up a meeting date.	
5.	Mr. Jackson will email Ms. Burmeister an updated list of subcommittee membership.	
6.	Ms. Burmeister will respond to Dr. Steve Arms about his question.	
7.	Committee members will come up with suggestions for equivalency criteria for PT samples.	

**PARTICIPANTS
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 1, 2000**

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